

A train of carriages would mechanically be far more safe at 100 miles an hour with undeviating traction, than 50 miles an hour with lateral oscillation; and the amount of friction under the steady guidance of restraint would be trifling compared with the results from lateral action of the carriages, the strains from which are too severe to be reasonably borne by rails, wheels, or axletrees. G. M.

#### "MUDDLE."

ANY real endeavour to defeat "muddle" (expressive and distressing dissyllable) has our heartiest good wishes. Against muddle,—the muddle of ignorance, the muddle of idleness, the muddle of want of order, the love-destroying and comfort-killing "muddle of inexorable cleanliness,"—against muddle in the drawing-room, the studio, or the workshop,—we wage war eternal and unsparring. Unhappy victims of muddle, who shall recount your miseries or obtain you redress? Muddle cannot get for five pounds what Order, Judgment, and Energy can get for one; muddle makes fortune of little avail, and takes the shine out of a life which might otherwise be all brightness.

"Lucky Jones has married a wife with 300*l.* a year, but then she is a sad muddle." Miserable Jones! do you know what you have done? Muddle would be dear at double the money. Muddle will provide for you no home to rest in, no sympathising comforter to advise. In the temple where muddle reigns there will be found no peace, no beauty, no good. Against muddle the dower weighs not. An observing eye, a calculating head, a ready hand, a gentle step, a loving heart, external neatness, internal purity, are more to be considered than hundreds a year, trashy accomplishments, lofty connections, and unhealthy apings of the class above. Mothers, be wise: make your daughters able women, real help-mates; not useless toys, joy-destroying muddles.

The book which has led us into this domestic outbreak, though it has some faults of style, and exposes the miserable results of muddle amongst the middle classes more forcibly than it teaches how these are to be avoided, is calculated to do much good, and cannot be too widely circulated.

#### ARCHITECTURAL ILLUSTRATION.

I KNOW not whether the same observation has ever been made before, but it is surely remarkable enough, and somewhat unaccountable also, that travelling architectural draughtsmen appear, one and all, to have actually shunned that Mecca of Palladianism, Vicenza. All the more strange is it, because there they might take possession of an unoccupied field, and find subjects for their pencils which are at once "celebrated and unknown,"—at any rate, unknown. That Palladio's works in that city are well known to architects by the published elevations, &c. of them, is indisputable; still we have nothing to give those who have not beheld the structures themselves an idea of their actual appearance, as modified not only by perspective, but by locality and combination with other objects, pictorial accidents of light and shade included. Whatever else in the matter may be doubtful, certain it is that our artists who travel, Syntax-like, "in search of the (architectural) picturesque," do cut Palladio; whence it may be presumed, they do not find in his structures anything like those superlative merits which are ascribed to him by architectural writers. Or are we to suppose, not that they cut Palladio and Vicenza, but that Vicenza itself is cut out of their maps? Their maps, however, seem to be equally defective with regard to many other places, which either they do not visit at all, or else find nothing in them worthy of being recorded by the pencil.

While such very stale and hackneyed subjects as the Pantheon, Coliseum, and St. Peter's at Rome, and the Doge's Palace at Venice, are served up to us again and again *ad nauseam*, no attempt is made to exhibit to us the untouched architectural treasures of

Genoa, Milan, Florence, Bologna, Padua, and many other places which, although sufficiently noted in themselves, are not noted at all by those who might there find even a Californian harvest for their sketch-books. There are, indeed, several foreign publications (Gautier's "Gènes," Cassina's "Milano," Famin's "Architettura Toscana," &c. &c.) which make us acquainted with the principal monuments in some of the cities above mentioned; yet, admirably as they are executed, and interesting and instructive as they are to the student—be he either a professional or a non-professional one—they are, besides being expensive, of a nature which renders them anything but attractive for others. Giving elevations, &c. and those, too, merely in outline, owing to which it is difficult even for those who perfectly understand them, to judge adequately of their effect—they are the reverse of pictorial and consequently of popular also. Even were all the monumental architecture of the various Italian cities completely exhausted by "illustrators," their general street architecture and scenery would supply an ample second crop.

As to the recent architecture of Italy, it is so completely ignored by English travellers, artists, and critics, that the art itself might be supposed to be utterly extinct—at any rate, now wholly unproductive—in that country. That comparatively little has been done in it during the present century, must be admitted; still, quite enough has been done to supply the architectural delineator with no inconsiderable stock of entirely fresh subjects: at any rate, the Italy of the 19th century has had its Piermarinis and its Cagnolas.

Or if the Italy of to-day be such a desert as far as contemporary architecture is concerned, as to afford nothing worthy of being noted by either the pen of the critic or the pencil of the draughtsman, such is most assuredly not the case with the Germany of to-day. There is in Berlin, Munich, Dresden, or in any one of them singly, quite enough to furnish matter for volumes of architectural description and criticism, and to employ a hundred pencils. Nevertheless, it obtains no notice here whatever, either from pencil or from pen. Mortifying in itself, this contemptuous neglect of the contemporary productions of architecture forces upon us the still more mortifying conviction that merely as art, architecture has no hold whatever on the sympathies of the public,—a state of things for which architects have mainly to thank themselves, and in which they seem to acquiesce, since they make no exertion to obtain another and a better one. Q.

#### LAND DRAINAGE.

A LECTURE on Drainage was delivered last week, at Kirtling, near Newmarket, by Mr. Hewitt Davis. The lecturer, in introducing the subject, said he could not offer any information more deserving the attention of landowners and farmers than that which was to be gained in considering the advantages to be derived from the thorough drainage of wet land at first it might be supposed these two classes were the only gainers, but this was not so; for in drawing the water off the surface of land, by means of underground drains, much of the source of damp and fog is removed, and in this way the climate of the country may be greatly ameliorated, and the health and enjoyment of all classes be greatly improved. The lecturer entered into various plans that have been pursued to drain land. He showed by quotations from Columella and Cato, that the system of draining 2,000 years ago had been by drains of 3 and 4 feet deep, laid with stones and wood; and that up to the introduction of tiles, in the last fifty years, little or no improvement in draining had been made. He then referred to the insecurity of any other material than tiles, and the danger in using any form but the circle. He stated that the expansion and contraction of a clay soil by wet and drought was such, at 4 feet deep, as to crush any form but the circle, or to press up the bottom so as to fill up the vacuum; and he exhibited a tile choked with clay he had brought from the Regent's Park, where they

were found in all directions, and where he was now draining 4 feet deep with pipes, after many attempts had been made without success at shallower depths and with other materials.

The Board of Health have recently published a body of evidence and statistics referring to this subject, to which we shall forthwith draw our readers' attention. The matter is one of great importance to the country.

#### OLD WHITE LEAD—PURE LINSEED OIL.\*

IN the year 1838 I was engaged in testing a white paint made from the refuse of litharge, for the Society of Arts, of which society, as an old member, I was also present at the committee meetings, when specimens not only of manufactured white leads were produced, but also of linseed oils, and I then, for the first time, became acquainted with a process of clarifying and cleansing the oil by means of sulphuric acid, which method I then, and have ever since, considered as prejudicial to the oil, destroying, as it must, that coherence in the vegetable property, and preventing its forming that perfect pellicle which it invariably does on exposure to the atmosphere during the process of drying, and which alone forms the safeguard to the colours mixed with it. I have always endeavoured to have my white lead ground in linseed oil in its natural state, but this operation is now rendered more difficult in consequence of the general adulteration of that oil with oil of rosin and pine, which latter can be had for a shilling a gallon,—I believe, hardly one-third the price of genuine linseed oil; and this mixture, I apprehend, renders the use of the sulphuric acid more necessary.

The reason of its being so clarified is, that the white lead, when ground, may at once appear as white as possible, which many, in their ignorance, look upon as a test of its being genuine, whereas, if ground in pure linseed oil, which has had the refuse cast down by means of introducing ivory black or powdered litharge, it will always at first have a yellow tinge, which is only to be got rid of by time; and hence arises the value of old ground white lead.

It has also occurred to me that the blackness, which in winter so often fastens upon exterior paint work, arises from this cause, the outer skin of oil having been rendered porous by the sulphuric acid. During a dense atmosphere, the sulphuretted hydrogen, then so preponderant, fastens readily on the unprotected lead, for which it has a great affinity, and produces an effect similar to that which is seen in most closets. I would, therefore, request your assistance to get rid of this growing evil, which not only affects house painting, but may also cause great damage to the artistic world. DAVID G. LAING.

#### MEETINGS OF ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETIES.

*Architectural Institute of Scotland.*—On 11th inst. the eighth meeting of the Second Session of this Institute was held at Glasgow, Sir James Anderson in the chair. The evening was entirely taken up with the reading of a paper by Mr. James Brown, architect, entitled "Our Scottish Churches."

*Birmingham Architectural Society.*—The first annual meeting of the Birmingham Architectural Society was held at the Philosophical Institution, on the 12th inst. Mr. D. R. Hill in the chair. The report of the committee stated that their anticipations of success on the formation of the society had been realised, and they trusted the foundation for a superstructure of importance had been laid. The following gentlemen were elected officers for the ensuing year:—Mr. D. R. Hill, president; Mr. S. Hemming, vice-president; Mr. Charles Edge, treasurer; and Mr. J. R. Botham, hon. secretary.

*Oxford Architectural Society.*—A meeting of the society was held on March 3. The secretary read the report of the committee, stating that the president of the society and Mr. Parker had, during the past week, been on a visit of inspection to Warwick, for the purpose of inspecting St. Mary's Church, at

\* "Home Truths for Home Peace," or, "Muddle defeated." London: Edinbrough Wilson. Edinburgh: Black, 1852.

\* Read at a meeting of the Institute of British Architects.